

# scout log at adventure



I recently completed the 2022 Cederberg Senior Scout Adventure which took place from 15 to 23 December 2022. I recorded my experiences on the trail in order to share some of the highlights and possibly to excite any future participants.

We completed the Southern Peaks clockwise route, which earned us the Xtreme Award badge as it is the most difficult of the three itineraries even though Sneeuwberg peak (the highest peak in the Cederberg) was removed from our itinerary due to a recent fire.

As a result of events during the 2016 Cederberg Adventure, we weren't allowed to use any flame to cook or heat our food, so we mostly received canned food which added more weight to our backpacks.

Our Patrol, number 22, consisted of: Dylan Cloete (Ranger - DK), Hannah Murphy (PL - 1st Durbanville), Matthew Stead (APL - 1st Durbanville), Zoey le Roux (1st Durbanville), Daniel Wilbraham (1st Durbanville), Keagan Coetzee (1st Durbanville), Lena Wiroth (9th/16th Cape Town), Menrad Holm (9th/16th Cape Town), Fulufhelo Mulaudzi (1st Midrand) and Dean Roberts (1st Midrand).

**DAY 1:** The busses departed from Cape Town and transported the majority of the scouts. I travelled privately and arrived at the camp headquarters at Keurbos a few minutes before the busses did. The area looked empty, but tents had been set up for staff, the first-aid base and also for a tuckshop. Soon the rest of the patrol arrived and we signed in and waited for the opening ceremony. It was hot and everyone was sweating... there was barely a cloud in sight. After the opening ceremony, we handed in our uniforms and any extra kit we no longer wanted to carry. It was now 11h31. We received our rations for the next four days and divided them between the patrol members. I carried Muesli, powdered milk, and a few cans.

Some of us went to swim in the nearby river to cool off since we would only be transported to our first base much later. At 15h45, we carried our packs to the warehouse where we strapped them on tops of Jeeps which would transport us for the next two hours from Keurbos HQ to Langkloof where we would be doing the 4x4 activity. After 30 minutes of driving, it suddenly started raining heavily and our packs, which were strapped to the roof of the Jeep, got soaked! Five of our patrol members were travelling in another Jeep which overheated thereby giving them a chance to store their bags inside the car. We arrived at the 4x4 activity centre sometime between 18h30 and 19h30 while the rain was still pouring. We helped the staff build a shelter once the rain had died down, made supper which consisted of Smash mash and corned beef and went to sleep at around 22h00. Some of us slept in our makeshift shelters of tarps and groundsheets while others slept in a nearby cave.

**DAY 2:** We woke up at 06h00, packed up and had breakfast which consisted of bland oats with a bit of peanut butter to add flavour. Next we did the 4x4 activity. We learnt how to fix a tyre puncture and a radiator. Some of us fixed a puncture on a spare tyre. We also learnt the uses of a winch and how a 4x4 works, among other things, before going on a 4x4 drive. We got stuck, but it was fun! Soon we had to



pack our bags and start the hike to Gabriel's Pass at the base of Wolfberg Arch. We met a local at the Langkloof settlement who guided us to the path. We had some breaks along the trail and luckily the overcast weather allowed us to hike far and at a quick pace. After quite some time, we arrived at Gabriel's Pass at the base of Wolfberg Arch. We chose to continue hiking the extra 2km up to Wolfberg Arch even though we were only meant to do it the following day. At the top we met two of the staff members, one of which was Oliver Murphy, a 1st Durbanville Rover. In fact, two of the four staff members at Wolfberg Arch are currently 1st Durbanville Rovers. We told them we were a day early and would prefer to do the base activity the following morning. We walked up to the Arch, which had an amazing view, and were surrounded by mist a few minutes later. We did some exploring to find a suitable cave to sleep in. Our patrol split into three groups, each sleeping in a different cave. We relaxed for the remainder of the day, played cards and ate supper which consisted of rolls and canned viennas. Some of us slept in a flat area outside a small cave. When we went to sleep there was a light mist which we expected to go away, but instead it got worse and later in the night it started raining. A few of us moved into the cave and eventually we fell asleep.

**DAY 3:** We woke up cold at 06h00.

The survival bags that some of us had used had been filled with water and had soaked the sleeping bags. We put our stuff out to dry and went to meet Charles and Oliver at Wolfberg Arch to go hiking up to Wolfberg peak. After hiking up Wolfberg peak and down again, with a bit of rock climbing in between, we had an hour's break for breakfast which consisted of muesli and hydrated milk powder. The clouds cleared a bit and we had a nice view and some wind. After breakfast, we began the orienteering activity which involved walking around and



looking for pieces of paper cable-tied to rocks. We also saw a snake. After that most of us were tired, but we decided to continue hiking even though we were already a full day ahead. Before we left, Hannah realised that she was missing the map, so we hiked back to our cave and luckily it was still there. It took us about 40 minutes to hike down to Gabriel's Pass and there was a light drizzle along the way. We saw another patrol on our way down. We hiked up to a saddle where we stopped and had lunch at 13h00. It started raining, so we found a cave in which to store our bags. It soon flooded, but luckily our bags remained dry. We sheltered under a rock during the downpour.

At around 14h14 the rain died down and we continued hiking. There was a light drizzle from time to time. Some of us were getting tired and after a while and several breaks, we arrived at Driehoek. We decided that it would be a suitable overnight location with Perdekloof (our next activity centre) only a few kilometres away. At 18h03 we ate supper and then elected to take the quick walk to Perdekloof so that we could relax for the entire following day. We arrived at 19h45 and were allowed to sleep in the astronomy tent once the astronomy activity was over. Some of us went swimming in the river at around 20h20. Afterwards we went to the tuck shop, which was managed by Jonathan, and had a chat with him while eyeing the fridges full of delicious treats. At 21h34 we went back to the tent where we prepared our sleeping gear and went to sleep.



**DAY 4:** We woke up at 07h45 after a great sleep. I was surprised my legs weren't hurting after all the hiking we had done. We hung up our wet kit on some fallen trees so that it could dry in the sunlight. There was barely a cloud in sight. We saw Oliver and Aiden (staff from Wolfberg Arch) walking back from the tuck shop. They had hiked throughout the morning from Wolfberg Arch to Perdekloof to buy four Cokes, some gas and a wooden spoon! At 07h58 we ate breakfast which consisted of Weetabix and hydrated milk powder and then waited for our first activity to begin. Later on we went to the tuck shop to buy some snacks. At 10h50 we went to the Dutch oven base where we made cheese bread, chicken casserole and apple pie. All this was cooked in Dutch ovens! Needless to say, there were no leftovers. We cleaned the utensils before returning to our camp. Sometime later Zoey, Stead and I were sent to the commando base to help with "something". Upon our arrival we found out that we had to dig a hole to hold the sewerage from the toilets. Not the best experience. We returned to our tent and I went to the tuck shop again.

By now it was 15h04. We chilled for a bit and later went to fetch our next load of rations. We unpacked all the food and discussed our plan for the next few days before we set off for the commando base. Commando was okay. A few people struggled, but the patrol was supportive. The obstacle course consisted of a rope bridge, a groundsheet thrown over some bushes which created tunnels for us to crawl through, some ropes with wooden bases called "Tarzan swings", a tall net/



(Ed. South Peak Scouts hiked the magenta route. Scouts were transported along the red Route. Credit: - Map extract from Slingsby Maps with kind permission).

rope wall we had to climb over, a spider web where we had to dodge through strings, a horizontal rope ladder and, finally, a swim down the river. We completed this obstacle course while trying not to injure our two additional patrol members, namely Melanie the watermelon and Eggberg the egg. Afterwards Hannah, Lena, Daniel and Dylan did individual runs of the course and all did well. We sat outside the tent and ate mini cheddar bites while the astronomy base was being set up. Once the astronomy base was ready, we made hot chocolate and attended the



presentation. The astronomy base was interesting. We learnt about the various planets and moons in our solar system, about space debris and how satellites record the universe. After the presentation we went outside where two telescopes were set up. We looked at Jupiter and its four moons and at Saturn. We also saw a few shooting stars. We went back to our tent, packed our rations, filled our water bottles for the next day and prepared our bags so that we would be ready for an early start the next day. At 23h04 it was lights out for all of us.

**DAY 5:** We woke up cold at 05h00. We cleaned up, gathered our bags and set off at 05h57. We had to cross an “unexpected” river and some shoes got wet, but we continued. We hiked through Driehoek and had a short break at a private camping area. At 07h36 we stopped at a river and had breakfast which consisted of Weetabix with hydrated milk powder, syrup and Salticrax. We continued along the tarred road and into a cloud of mist where we met another patrol who advised us to stay on the road and not take the trail. We hiked on and had a quick break at 10h47 where we had water and some snacks. Later we saw another patrol who gave us tips as regards the upcoming path. Eventually, Daniel shouted that we had cell service! We checked to see who had won the World Cup. Most of us were happy as Argentina had won. By now it was 11h20. We saw another patrol who passed us and we met them again later at the bottom just before the bricked road to Algeria. We had another quick break before we continued hiking. Some of us had hurting feet. When we arrived at Algeria at around 14h00, Dylan bought us Cokes and Doritos. While we were eating lunch which consisted of tuna on Salticrax, a staff member came to collect us to take us to Grootkloof. There we swam and made pizza surrounded by swarms of friendly bees which were attracted to the flour. The pizza was good and afterwards we played “Exploding Kittens”. We went for a second swim and I had a scratch in the food swop-box. Some of the patrol members went off to shower and then we all went to bed at 21h39.



**DAY 6:** We woke up at 05h57 and had oats and syrup for breakfast. We packed our gear and boarded the transport bus/overlander,

which was late, and departed for Grootkloof at 07h39. We listened to music on the crowded vehicle. We arrived at Algeria Campsite at 08h07 and I bought some liquorice for later. We hiked through Algeria and met Fulu’s parents who were camping there. Thereafter we started the hike up to Middleberg hut. We crossed a river, took a few breaks and hiked some more to an area with a gentler gradient where we rested. By now it was 11h20. We arrived at Middelberg hut at around 12h30. There we met another patrol (the 9th/16th Cape Town adult patrol) who had apparently seen a boomslang fall from the tree that they were sitting under.

Lunch consisted of Melrose and corned meat with Provitas and this we enjoyed next to the river near the hut. Thereafter, most of the patrol went for a swim. We decided that it would be better to continue hiking that very evening so we would have less hiking to do the next day which was expected to be hot. We left Middleberg hut at around 17h30 after a nap and eventually arrived at Eenboomkamp where we saw the Cape Town 9/16th patrol once again. They told us they would be leaving at around 03h00 the following day and we should sleep away from them so as to not disturb them. We moved to another tree where we ate cold couscous with mixed vegetables and chickpeas while listening to Christmas music. It was 21h22.



**DAY 7:** We woke up at 05h00 to a very windy day. I saw a scorpion. We left Eenboomkamp at 06h07. We had a breakfast of digestive biscuits with Weetabix along the trail near some large rocks at 07h44. Thereafter we hiked some more, passed a gravesite (of P.L. Du Toit 9 December 1871-1888 and a nameless grave) and met a few groups of non-scouting people on their way down while we were having a break near a stream. Later on we met a patrol which was hiking from Welbedacht cave to the Dutch oven base at Perdekloof. We had a break a bit later on before beginning the steeper portion of the ascent. We arrived at Welbedacht cave at around 15h00 after an exhausting hike in the heat. Some people struggled to finish the climb, but in the end we all made it. Some of us went back to carry the bags of tired patrol members. We ate lunch which consisted of Provitas and Salticrux with Melrose and corned meat and had a rest. The other patrol that would be staying with us in the cave arrived shortly afterwards. We made a supper of couscous with canned tomato, canned viennas and corned meat, watched the sunset and packed our stuff for the early start the following morning. We went to bed at 21h31 hoping the mice wouldn't chew through our bags.

**DAY 8:** We woke up at 04h00, packed our gear while listening to some upbeat music and set off for Tafelberg at 04h56. We saw leopard tracks along the way. We stopped at a turnoff to have breakfast and unpacked all necessary kit for our hike



up Tafelberg. We hiked up Tafelberg and arrived at the Vlake at 06h53 where we met the patrol we had shared the cave with. We waited for the rock climbing staff to meet us. The staff arrived and we hiked further to the rock climbing base, stopping along the way so that Paul, a rock climbing staff member, could give us information about the rocks and the mountains. We did the rock climbing activity first while the other patrol hiked up to the trig beacons. To get to the rock climbing base we had to pass through some narrow spaces. We arrived at the rock climbing base at 08h30. This was a fun-filled activity! There were two courses we could choose between, the one more difficult than the other. Dylan was the only one to choose the difficult course which he completed on his first try. Once we had finished climbing to the top, we had to cross a small ravine using ropes to pull ourselves across (Ed. A Tyrolean traverse) and then abseil down a rock face.

We were done at around 10h00 and so we took off our climbing gear and hiked up to Tafelberg's highest trig beacons. There were parts where we went through caves and we even had to use a chain to get up a steep rock wall at the end of another ravine. We reached the top at 11h00 and there we found several ponds from which we filled up our water bottles. We also collected a few rocks and held them above the highest trig beacon for a photo. At the end of the hike we had to help carry the rock climbing equipment back down again. It took a while but we eventually got back to where our bags were. We passed Welbedacht cave and had a rest at the small river where we had been the previous day. We swam and relaxed. By now it was 15h30. The rest of the patrol, who were a bit behind a few of us, eventually joined us and, after a well-deserved rest, we continued.



We met up with the rock climbing staff and the patrol that was ahead of us at the parking lot. There the rock climbing staff took our bags and transported them to the pickup point. We walked the final three kilometres and arrived at the pickup location, namely Moutonsklip turnoff to Driehoek, where we piled into a Landrover and a bakkie and drove back to HQ at Keurbos. It was now 17h03. We stopped at Algeria, bought some snacks and continued to Keurbos. We arrived at Keurbos at around 18h15, tired but relieved. We helped unpack the rock climbing equipment at the warehouse from which we had departed earlier on. The adventure was finally



coming to an end. We met up with some familiar faces once again and shared a few stories. Some of us got patched up at the first aid tent. Soon it was suppertime and then we were allocated jobs for the following morning's clean-up operation. We were the first patrol to be allocated jobs and most of us got to pack away the kitchen. We ate a delicious supper of boerewors rolls, mixed salad, potato salad, a piece of meat and a cold drink; all sponsored by Spar. After supper we washed our dishes and played cards near the flagpoles. Later on we moved our bags, set out our sleeping gear and went to bed at 22h07.

**DAY 9:** We woke up early once again, but for the last time, at 04h50 to be ready to pack up the kitchen at 05h00. Everyone was cold and a bit slow but eventually we moved all the kitchen equipment and took down the two kitchen tents. Soon our work was done and we moved off to chill for a while. We played cards (Uno Flip) with the Cape Town 9th/16th patrol and, after a lot of waiting, we changed into our uniforms to be ready for the closing parade.

Thankfully, the closing ceremony was short and, finally, we were able to depart at around 11h30.

If you are reading this to gain insight on what to expect from a Senior Scout Adventure, here are some notes and tips from the patrol:

- Water purifying tablets/drops are extremely important! Some scouts got sick from the water they had drunk and were unable to continue the adventure. Rather be safe than sorry.
- Water additives are great to have on the hike. Game and Rehydrate are some of the best and they don't add much weight.



- Some form of muscle relief, like arnica cooling gel, can be helpful if you have aching muscles.
- Bring hand sanitizer and wet wipes.
- Snacks are provided by the adventure, but bring your own as you may want something more to eat or you may possibly not like all of the food that is provided. Rather bring too much than too little. If you realise that you have over packed, you can leave stuff behind at HQ.
- Duct tape and a needle and thread can be used to fix tears in clothes, shoes or bags. It can also be used for other quick repairs or for holding stuff together.
- Line your backpack with a plastic bag and also pack small things together in Ziplock bags. We weren't expecting rain, but it rained on the first day and our bags got soaked and so did much of our kit. A bag liner also makes it much easier to find things, especially when packing and unpacking your bag on the hike. Storing items in clear zip lock bags ensures that they remain dry and can more easily be found. Don't forget about your sleeping bag! Store it in a smaller plastic shopping packet. Also make sure that your bag has a rain cover.
- Swimming costumes aren't necessary; a pair of quick-drying shorts will do just fine, but remember to pack a quick-dry towel.
- A digital copy of the route can be helpful. Apps such as Mapy, Forge and Komoot all work well. I used Komoot to plan and record our journey. It was extremely useful on the trail to verify our location and to make sure that we were on the right path. It also helped us to see how much further we had to hike and to note the expected time it would take us to get there.
- If you plan on using your phone, bring along a large solar-powered power bank.

Overall, the Cederberg Senior Scout Adventure was an incredibly worthwhile and rewarding experience which I certainly hope to do again in the future. I highly recommend it!

Keagan Coetzee - Scout 1st Durbanville (16 years old)





